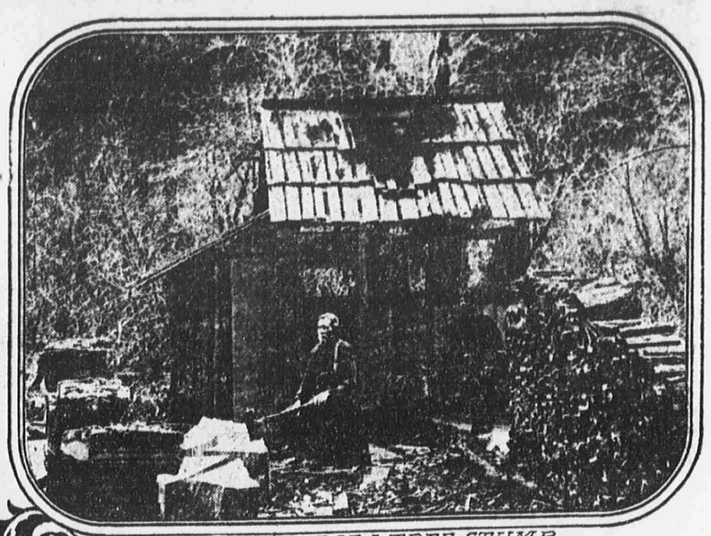
BUILD THEIR HOUSES IN TREE STUMPS

Giant Firs of the Puget Sound Country Rivals of California's Sequoias—Stumps Big Enough to Live In and to Dance On—The Enormous Waste of Timber

CABIN OF A WASHINGTON FAMILY AND THEIR FRONT PORCH.

A BIG LOG ON A RAILROAD CAR



HUT MADE OUT OF A TREE STUMP

EQUESTRIAN PARTY ON A STUMP.

RUINS OF A BIG FIR.

The big trees of the United States are not all in the show groves of California by any means, although many people have the idea that the sequoias are the giants of American forests. It is true that they are the largest in circumference, but many of the red firs around Puget Sound grow to as great height, for specimens have been felled which measured 325 feet from the point where they were cut to the topmost branch. They were really eight or ten feet longer, because measured only along the fallen trunk.

Such is the size of the red fir in some parts of the State of Washington that timbers for bridges 150 feet in length have been sawed from a single trunk, while ship spars more than 100 feet long are often taken from them. They are far more graceful and symmetrical than the sequoia, their admirers say, for the reason that being smaller around at the bottom they taper upward more gradually.

The sequoia, such as is seen in the Big Tree grove in Mariposa county, Cal., bulges out for 75 or 100 feet from the ground up, which gives it a bulky and ungainly appearance compared with the fir. This bulge is so large that some of the trees have holes cut through them in the form of arches big enough to allow a two horse team to be driven through.

When a fir is fifteen feet in diameter at the butt it makes a pretty big tree. On some of the islands of Puget Sound as well as in the country north of Seattle trees of this size have been found among the smaller ones.

The timbermen consider the felling of a tree of this sort something to brag about, especially when the trunk is so large that seven or eight men can sit side by side in the cut made by the axes without crowding. As already stated, however, the trunk of a fallen fir does not represent its entire length, for the stump left is sometimes more than ten feet in height.

This is due to a custom which the lumbermen in the Pacific Northwest have of hewing at a considerable distance from the roots. It is done for three reasons—for convenience, for safety and to avoid hitting any decayed spot which may be in the heart.

Sometimes the larger trees begin to decay in the centre at a point near the roots. The bad spot, as the lumberman calls it, may become so large that perhaps only a rim of sound wood a foot or two in thickness is left next to the bark, but the fir is so tough and vigorous that this will support the great weight above it.

When one of these big trees is being cut down, unless borings are made with augers or other tools, the axemen cannot tell whether the heart is decayed or not. If it should be they may cut away so much of the sound portion that the tree will fall before they are ready. It may also topple over in the wrong direction and before the cutters and swampmen can get out of the way.

When one of these forest monarchs comes down in the wrong place it is liable to make trouble, crushing down smaller trees which may be in the way and hurling branches in all directions by the tremendous force of the fall. It is also easier work to cut with the axe if a man has something springy to stand upon instead of the solid ground.

Notches are made in the trunk and boards driven into these upon which the axemen stand while they are making the undercut. Standing six or eight feet above the ground on this frail support, two men who know how to handle their axes will soon open up a gash in the trunk in which half a dozen people can find seats.

As a result of this method of getting out timber, the waste is enormous. Government forestry experts who have investigated the logging industry in Washington and Oregon calculate that only about 65 per cent. of the timber available for building and other purposes is actually sent to the sawmill. Some 30 per cent. fit for lumber is left in the woodland, either in the stumps or the branches, which could also be cut into boards and planking.

There is enough wood in some of the larger stumps to build a small cottage, if it were secured, but the forests are so vast and the trees so large that the loggers leave much of the small timber or use it for skidways on which to haul the bigger logs to the railroad or timber boom. When a settler clears his land for farming, there is a saying that he sometimes burns its cost in the timber left on it by the loggers, which goes up in smoke.

It is due to these wasteful methods of cutting down the great forests, especially in Washington, that some of the settlers live in trees, so to speak. Where the trees have been cut off in the foothill country and in the valleys near Puget Sound the region is called the logged-off land.

The soil is fertile, so that it will produce good crops of grain and vegetables, and orchards can be planted on it, but as it is dotted with stumps the problem of clearing it entails not a little labor as well as expense. Such land can be bought for a very small price compared with land which is entirely clear of the stumps and trees.

The people who are taking up the logged-off lands are usually accustomed to getting along in a small way and do not mind living in rather crowded quarters, so quite frequently one of the biggest stumps will be kept for a temporary home. After the tree has been cut down, if the heart of the stump is rotten, exposure to the weather rapidly increases the decay, so that in a few years it may become merely a shell with the outside only a few inches in thickness.

Then it is an easy matter to cut a hole in one end for a door and two or three small holes for windows, to clean out the inside, to cut down an adjacent cedar and split it into shingles for a roof, and the house is ready for occupation when the stove, dishes and furniture are put in. A trunk 15 feet in diameter will give a surprising amount of room. Some of them contain nearly 150 square feet.

If the stump is so sound that it would be too big a job to cut away the inside of it, the settler sometimes uses one end for a wall of his house, placing logs or planks against it and making a sort of roof lean-to, which is covered with shingles or boards. Then he nails some cleats against the sides of the stump for a stepladder and it is used for a variety of purposes.

Children may take it for a playground. It is handy for the mother to spread out her clothes to dry in the sun where she has no other backyard. It also serves for a front porch, the family sitting on it in the summer evenings.

After the farmer gets enough ahead to build a larger and more comfortable home the old stump is generally preserved, for it can be used as a shed, sometimes a stable for the ponies or as a storehouse. One of the biggest stumps in the Northwest, up near Sedro-Woolley, is utilized occasionally as a dancing platform. It is more than fifteen feet in diameter and there is room enough on the top for four couples to dance a quadrille.

The decayed wood is so rich and fertile that plants will readily grow in it, and some of the people who can find time to have a dooryard and a few flowers will leave one of the stumps after the land has been cleared to be turned into a flower bed, sometimes planting vines which run up about the base and make a very pretty effect.

The way they get rid of these ruins of the forest is by blowing them up or burning them. Holes are bored to the roots, dynamite cartridges are inserted and all are exploded at the same time. If the holes have been bored in the right places and deep enough the stump is shattered to the roots and is thrown out in such small pieces that one will make a fine supply of kindling wood.

WOMEN STILL BRIDGE MAD,

AND MOST OF THEM PLAY THE GAME FOR MONEY.

Lent Welcomed Because It Gives Them More Time for Cards—Some Play for High Stakes—Social Barriers Swept Away—American Women Play Well.

It was two or three years ago that various New York clergymen took to denouncing from the pulpit woman's suddenly developed passion to gamble at bridge whist. Sunday after Sunday women listened to denunciations of the bridge whist craze—and continued to play bridge. They have kept on playing bridge, but the denunciatory sermons have stopped—stopped so completely that of late many persons have been curious to know if bridge whist has had its innings, if its popularity is waning, if women have transferred their affections to some other card game like skat or five hundred, for example.

Naturally the host of bridge teachers in New York laugh at such suggestions; but then one would scarcely look to them for an impartial view of the subject. More trustworthy evidence is given by fashionable New York women, who agree in saying that bridge's grip on society is firmer than ever and that its vogue during Lent this year will far exceed anything achieved in the past.

"Undoubtedly sooner or later a reaction is bound to set in, but so far there is no sign of it," one woman remarked. "Bridge is an old story now, consequently it is not talked about so much as when it first was taken up by fashionable society; but it is played harder and more constantly than ever.

"Every spare hour is filled with bridge, it seems to me. One can't get away from it. There is scarcely a mail which does not bring me an invitation to play at the house of some one of my friends—of a morning, or following a luncheon, or from 3 to 5 or 6 o'clock, or after a dinner.

"Instead of only the avowedly gay women, the butterflies, playing, which was the case at first, women who go in for the simple life, or say they do, home keeping women who visit their nursery and their kitchen once in a while and are inclined to frown on acquaintances who love to gamble at cards and at the race track—even they have taken to playing bridge like mad.

"Young women, who at the outset rather looked upon card playing as a matronly pastime, are taking lessons and studying bridge harder than they ever studied anything else in their lives. One of the very best bridge players in society is an unmarried woman not yet 30.

"Oh, no, all the women in society do not play for money. Certainly there are always prizes of some sort, but that is not playing for money. I know of Sunday afternoon games where there were no prizes, even.

"The bridge players of society, meaning practically every woman who is not paralyzed or blind, may be divided into three classes—those willing to play for high stakes, those who play for small stakes only, those who will not play for money at all, but will play for prizes.

"At first it was not generally known who was who, and time was lost in sending out invitations. Now, on the contrary, we all know pretty well how our friends stand, and the woman who balks at anything higher than a cent ante is not likely to be asked to make one of four players who like to take a flyer every now and then. Nor will a woman who only plays for prizes get an invitation to play in a game for money stakes. It is too tiresome, you know, to have a table spoiled by some one with scruples about even a one cent limit.

"Yes, the great majority of women play for money—small stakes, though. Many tales which from time to time have gone the rounds about fashionable women behind closed doors playing for high stakes have been products of the imagination, I fancy."

Another woman took a different view of the question of high stakes. She thought that there were many more quiet games for high stakes than society in general knew anything about.

"The women who play these games," she went on, "can afford to risk large sums and to pay well for the excitement, for there can be no question but there is more excitement, hence more enjoyment, for women who crave excitement, in playing for a one hundred dollar than a one cent stake.

"I heard of one case in which a guest, rather new at the game but not at all averse to a good sized stake, was asked 'how twenty-five would suit her?' She smilingly assented, thinking 25 cents was meant, and it was not until some one commented on the amount of her winnings after the first hand had been played that she found out the stake was $25.

"When a number of women get together to play the stakes are almost invariably low, and as for losses and gains, most of us come out even, sometimes a little to the good or to the bad, at the end of the season. Several of my friends have come out about $300 ahead, and it is not often average players exceed that sum.

"There are exceptions though. The maid of one lucky player, who is not known to be possessed of very large means, told my maid that her mistress made enough at bridge last winter to pay for all her gowns, and she has a good many.

"Some day bridge may pall on society. Just now we live and breathe bridge; we even go so far as to waive social barriers in order to get a good player. Persons with little or nothing to recommend them beyond an ability to play a ripping game of bridge get an entrée into houses whose doors otherwise would forever remain closed to them.

"From the first I set my face against this, only to give way weakly when one day at the last moment almost I got word that an expected guest had been taken ill and could not come. That meant, of course, that lacking a substitute three other guests must be disappointed.

"I telephoned to half a dozen of my intimates in vain. To my despairing ejaculation 'What shall I do?' the sixth called through the phone 'Try Mrs. Blank. She is impossible, of course, socially, but she does play a tirtop game and she is not loaded down with engagements.'

"'Never,' I screamed back and hung up the receiver. A minute later I called up Mrs. Blank, invited her in my blandest tone to play bridge at 3 o'clock, listened to her delighted acceptance, and then sat down and cried with rage.

"Yes, she played well enough to carry off most of the stakes at her table and I caught myself wishing I had her for a partner instead of the novice who fell to my lot. But, of course, there are limits to that sort of thing."

"I do not play for money and I find that I am cut off from playing with the women I know best," somewhat dolefully remarked a young matron who says she has spent a small fortune on bridge lessons. "I do not think many women now play for high stakes—they play too often for that—but I do find that most women want some sort of stakes.

"The surest way to be unpopular with smart society is to balk at playing for money. The word gambling is never associated with bridge. Tell any woman who plays a five cent limit that she gambles and she is furious.

"I cannot begin to tell how many bridge clubs will meet during Lent and how many extra classes have been formed to meet in the evening. There are two very smart clubs of fifty members each which have met afternoons once a week during the winter and which mean to keep right on through Lent, besides at least ten smaller clubs of which I happen to know."

"How do the nerves of the average woman stand the strain of so much bridge," was asked of a frail looking woman who is among the most enthusiastic bridge players.

"On the whole very well," said she. "I can't say that playing bridge in all of one's spare hours is especially restful to the nerves, neither do I agree with the doleful people who predict an era of nervous prostration as the outcome of the wave of bridge popularity."

When a teacher of bridge of the socially elect was asked if there were not indications that the popularity of bridge was on the wane among the very fashionable he echoed with a rising inflection: "On the wane?"

"It is so much on the wane," laughed his wife, who also teaches bridge, "that we cannot begin to fill the demands on us for lessons.

"The desire to play bridge is sweeping this country and other countries. Here is a letter from Poland, in which the writer requests permission to translate my husband's book on bridge whist into Polish.

"In order to meet the demand for lessons in this country we are conducting lessons by correspondence. Already we have sent out 1,300 of the series of lessons."

"What may happen in the future, no one can predict," resumed the teacher in chief, as his wife paused, "but this much is certain, that the upper circles of New York society just now scarcely do anything without bridge. The game follows dinners, it comes after luncheons, it fills in the afternoons.

"Where people used to sit around bored after dinner, they now get out the bridge tables, and young girls as well as their mothers enjoy the game."

"Is it true that, as a club man remarked not long ago, 'there are not half a dozen women in New York who play a really fine game of bridge?'

"Nonsense," was the emphatic reply. "I could name dozens of really fine players among the society women I have taught. The average woman, in fact, plays a better game than the average man, for the reason that she practices a good deal more because she has more time to play.

"American women are the best card players in the world—among women, I mean. Their fine playing of bridge has been commented on in England and on the Continent."

"Do not New York women play for higher stakes than formerly?"

"Not to my knowledge. From what I see and hear the five cent limit is the most popular among women."

"Of course," commented the expert's wife, "considerable money may be lost and won even with a five cent limit."

SECRETS OF THE WEATHER.

WHEN THE FORECASTS PROVE ALL WRONG, THINK OF THIS.

Bother Made for the Observers by Lulla—Cleveland Gybing Ice Fog—Call to Finback a Bandyleg—Lungfish and Sea Nymph—"Fish Gallop Daytime."

The men who are usually blamed for the weather, winter and summer, and who take the blame very peacefully, have a code by which they transmit official secrets. In all the weather offices reports are received daily from neighboring districts, and also from distant parts of the country, so that the weather observers may figure out the possibilities of the ensuing twenty-four hours. The transmission of these reports in cipher produces some surprising statements, though they are received with that lack of interest which seems to characterize weather observers in general when the subject of discussion is their livelihood, the weather.

So far as can be ascertained there is no reason calling for secrecy to explain why the weather men should telegraph their reports in cipher. Nobody has ever evinced a disposition to run off with the visible supply of weather. But Uncle Sam seems to like mystery, and his weather men convey their pulsating thoughts to one another in a fashion which often results in peculiar phrases and information very mystifying to the lay observer.

The New York weather observer daily receives reports of the weather in all the large cities and many of the smaller ones, beginning with Washington, the official headquarters for all United States weather, and moving down the line to that modest but potent weather station, Medicine Hat. In the office high up among the skyscrapers the telegraph instrument ticks busily a moment and produces the following bit of typewritten melancholy from the disturbed weather man at Buffalo:

"Murder, Lulla, saddest bibbitary upon record."

What the details of Lulla's crime are no one seems to know. The Buffalo man is highly excited over the affair, because shortly afterward another message over the wire adds to the mystery, thus:

"Gambit Lulla sunk babish."

This information might be expected to increase the despondency of the New York weather man. An outsider might conclude the telegraph operator had slipped up and that the message should read, "Gambler Lulla sunk baby." However, the observer seems to be in no way anxious about the crime, so the explanation is received scornfully.

The Binghamton man rushed to the wire and sent the following a little later:

"Meeken, kyhy forbore Eva subdolus coal box."

The New York man read it without a sign of emotion. If he thinks the Binghamton man has the D.T.'s, no one can tell it by the manner in which the message is received. Something serious has evidently happened to Eva, but the weather man refuses to answer by advice of counsel when asked about it.

The excitement is dying down when the Albany observer lets the pill go out long enough to get this on the wire:

"Fish gallop daytime."

Nobody denies this statement even if it does come from Albany. It's a funny thing to think about for an outsider, but it doesn't get even a smile in the weather office.

Then the man at Cleveland feels he is being overlooked. The best he can give us is an ice fog, which is presumably the common or garden variety. His telegram reads:

"Nullify lucky gybing ice fog."

This probably accounts for the warm weather this winter. A gybing ice fog ought to be a fairly interesting spectacle, but one is at a loss to tell whether the Cleveland man is boasting or sorry his town is oppressed by it.

Rochester weather evidently produced an appetite, and the restaurants were closed the day this wire was received:

"Mutton, mulberry, otter."

The New York weather man, not being a chef, filed the telegram with silent dignity. Then the Boston man slipped into the telegraph station in a vengeful mood and wired in haste:

"Marlboro guy Eddy."

Why Marlboro should do this is not plain. Anyhow, the local weather man refused to take any hand in it, and the message went up in the files. Probably some mysterious reference to Mrs. Eddy, but how should a New Yorker know the details?

The next message from Pittsburg is entirely hopeless. It is brief, and possibly pregnant with meaning. It says:

"Coal artist upcast eternal."

In Philadelphia the weather observer seems to apologize for not taking a more active participation in shaping the weather. He says:

"Unfit gall organ."

This may mean a lot of things, but the Philadelphia man is excused because the weather is pretty decent and he can stay out of it until he feels better.

Speaking of infirmities, the next message brought a request that sounds like a sailor's cussing. It might mean something, but it was an extraordinary request. It came in from Charleston, reading:

"Finback my bandyleg."

The next statement was important, if true. It ticked in from St. Louis, where the weather observer seems to be a botanist as well as a dispenser of breezes. He announced calmly that:

"Guardian fanfoot is budding."

A budding fanfoot is probably much more interesting than a matured one, although either would be regarded in New York with curiosity.

In the report of the Atlanta man mention of Lulla was made, showing the young lady does not confine her activities to any one locality. Atlanta says:

"Birmingham Lulla hung dust brush. Immigrate."

Of course some people might hesitate under the somewhat cloudy conditions in the message, but it is considered proper form in weather circles to immigrate when called upon to do so.

A crime on the high seas is mentioned in the next message. It may be some vindictive person trying to ruin the seaside resort business by reporting the death of the main attraction, which in this case is not a sea serpent but a sea nymph. The wire comes from Tampa, Fla., and reads:

"Birmingham lungfish hung sea nymph Emily."

One would judge from this that summer resort proprietors get familiar enough with their prize attractions to even name them, but the report was discredited, anyhow.

In far off Spokane, Wash., the weather man held political views which he expressed in this telegram:

"Defeat reform. Effeminate."

Of course he might elaborate on this brief command if the telegraph toll were not so high. His message was looked upon as a bit of impertinence, and was not even filed.

The last message was from New Orleans. Whether it was an insult or a piece of advice from a frank heart could not be discovered. At any rate it read:

"Wash, quig, wash tocko, wash."

New Yorkers, being scrupulously clean people, could not be expected to take umbrage at this insinuation. One stout man in the office who didn't know much about weather unless it happened to rain advised sending back the insulting telegram with a few curt words of rejoinder.

Some particularly bad day when the weather is exceptionally annoying think of this method of communication. It may explain the uncertainty of things.

FASHION IN DRINK.

Absinthe Frappe Made Popular by a Song, Scotch Whiskey by Golf.

"Strange things govern people's taste in the matter of drinks," said the old time, white haired barkeeper. "Before the 'Absinthe Frappé' was sung in 'Nordland' we very rarely had a call for absinthe in that form.

"The tune and words of the song were catchy, people got to learning it, they caught a little of the song's sentiment and began to think about the drink. Then they began to try it.

"Few cared for the new decoction the first time. It tasted like dissolved cough drops, but like the olive habit, it doesn't take long to get it. The 'absinthe frappé' is now the most popular morning drink in the Tenderloin.

"Scotch whiskey came to America with golf. Before the thumping of the little white ball became a popular American sport some Scotch whiskey was drunk, but comparatively little. It was usually taken hot as a winter drink.

"Then came the highball and everybody drank Scotch. Now Scotch is palling on the public taste. After a man has drunk Scotch for a few months he gets so that the peculiar smoky flavor is lost, and he finds he's drinking a strong, rather rough whiskey without the smoke that was the redeeming feature when the habit was young.

"Besides, so many things that are not Scotch at all, that never crossed the ocean and never saw a distillery are sold from refilled bottles, that one hardly knows what he is getting. It is always that way with a drink that becomes popular.

"The fad for foreign drinks following the introduction of Scotch led to Irish whiskey, Kimmel whiskey, various bitters and sweet cordials for the women.

"But all these fads are dying out, and we have fewer calls for unusual drinks. People are getting back to good old Kentucky and Pennsylvania grades of whiskey. Straight red liquor with plain water for a chaser is getting more popular every day, and the men who stick to that sort of liquid diet will live longer and die happier than the fellow who follows fads and fancies in his boozing."

THE SOUTH THE PLACE TO DIE.

Down There They Show They Know It When a Prominent Citizen Dies.

Two Southerners now living in New York were exchanging recollections.

"Whatever became of ——, who came up here from Selma a few years after reconstruction?" asked the Kentuckian.

"Went back, baggage and accoutrements, about four years ago," answered the Georgian.

"Didn't he do well in New York?"

"Better than he ever did before. But Jim had a streak of that fool sentiment which has kept so many Southerners down at the heel. He was always pining."

"If he was doing so well why did he pine?"

"He always used to say to me that New York was the best town on earth to live in but he always got the blues when he got to thinking about dying here. And what do you suppose was the kick about that?

"I was up at his house one night and he got to doing business with the undertaker as usual. I made myself very inquisitive, for I had got tolerable tired of hearing him on that topic.

"Then eupon he dug up a bundle of Southern newspapers. They were from several States. Jim began opening the file. Nearly every paper he opened had an obituary of some prominent man or woman.

"'Look at 'em,' said Jim in a forlorn sort of way.

"'Well, Jim,' I said, 'what about 'em?'

"'That's it,' he replied. 'Every one of these obituaries has mourning rules at the top and bottom and in some cases the whole of the page is in mourning. They read as if the writers were broken hearted. Some of the articles have poetry in them. Now and then there is some Latin.'

"I asked him if it wasn't all right for a good man to have such a send off.

"He allowed as I was right.

"'That's what I am talking about,' he said. 'That's what I want. A fellow like you and me has no chance to get a notice in New York. The other day one of the best men in Alabama shuffled the coil and he got less than seven lines, and some of the papers here don't know yet that he is dead. When I got my batch of Alabama papers they had left out the Sheriff's sales and some of the county news in order to make a spread on my old friend. It's the same whenever a good man dies down there.'

"It was a streak of sentiment in Jim. He couldn't help it. It preyed on him until he just quit a good business here and hiked to the back-yonder."

"And he is waiting to die, I reckon, so as to get a good obituary."

"No, he died about a year ago. I got an Alabama paper printed the day after his demise, and all there was in it was the usual death notice that looked as if it had been paid for. The last line in it stated that the deceased had spent the best days of his life in New York.

"In some parts of the South it is considered a crime for a man who has lived down there to go anywhere else. If he goes back he never seems to be as big as he was before he left.

"That was what ailed Jim. I reckon if he had stood still in Alabama he would have been good for at least a column in his town paper."